THE PHILIPPINES

Greater in Area and Less in Population Than First Estimated.

Frederick J. Haskin in The Sunny South.

This article, being the first of a series from the Philippines, will be devoted in the main to statistics. The reader desirous of becoming posted on conditions existing in our Far Eastern possessions will do well to preserve the facts contained herein, as they will be conducive to a better understanding of the accounts to follow, and will be valuable for reference at all times.

Although hundreds of books and thousands of columns of newspaper articles have been written on this subject, new conditions are continually being formed which, together with the established facts, should be kept constantly before the people of the United States, because the future political privileges of the Filipino must be determined by American legislation. As the attempt is being made to educate the native, the American should not remain in ignorance of the condition of his government's ward. While all argument may be colored by the interests or prejudices of the individual, the actual statistics can not be misleading, and are, therefore, worth remembering.

The Philippine Islands are a part of the East Indian archipelago. They are located southeast of Asia, almost south of Japan, and north of Borneo. They are altogether tropical. The zone which we acquired from Spain as set forth by the treaty of Paris (December 10, 1898), including land and water, amounts to an area almost thirteen times as large as all of the New England States. The census of the Philippine Islands, just issued by the American government, is the first accurate record of what our possessions here really amount to. This shows that there are more islands in the group than the Spaniards thought there were.

The exact number, including everything which appears separately at high tide, is 3,141. However, 2,775 of these islands are very small, each being less than a square mile in area. About 1,500 of them are of such little consequence that they have never been named. The total area of all the islands in the group is 115,026 square miles. Fully half of this territory is contained within the limits of the two large islands, Luzon and Mindanao, the former being about the size of Louisiana and the latter about as large as Indiana. Thus it will be seen that there is considerably more water than land within the limits of the zone ceded to us. There are so many indentations in the archipelago, that its coast line, like that of Alaska, is greater than the combined Atlantic and Pacific seaboards of the United States. The American government paid Spain $20,000,000 for the islands, which was about 20 cents per acre for all the land contained in them.

The population of the Philippines has been found to consist of about 7,000,000 civilized inhabitants, and a little more than half a million savages. Included in those designated as civilized are 41,000 Chinamen and 900 Japanese. Exclusive of the army there are over 8,000 Americans residing here at the present time, as well as about 4,000 Spaniards, 700 Englishmen and 400 Germans. The bulk of the native population is supposed to be of Malay extraction. Although past records are very incomplete, the population of the Philippines is supposed to have been quadrupled within the past century. This is a very small increase when compared with the growth of the United States, which was fifteen times as great during the same period. Relieved of the devastating effects of war and ravages of disease, it is believed the population of the islands will increase during the next few years at a rate never before equaled in their history.

The establishment of accurate tables of mortality has disclosed a number of unexpected results. It is surprising to find that the death rate among the natives is very high, and correspondingly low among the foreigners. The mortality among the Filipinos is greater than of any European races whose records are known, and it is doubtless not exceeded anywhere unless it be in some of the more unhealthy provinces of British India. The greatest loss is shown among children less than one year old, the rate among these having gone as high as 322 per thousand. This is said to be a forfeiture of infant life, due to ignorance rather than to the climate. Mothers allow children to begin eating solid food when they are not strong enough to digest it, which is almost certain to cause cholera infantum and convulsions. Every effort is being made to make the natives understand that babies three or four months of age must not be fed on such things as rice, mangoes and bananas.

Time has shown that the foreigner who will obey the rules of health prescribed for a hot climate can live in the Philippines with almost as much immunity from disease as if he were residing in the United States. This is proved by the record kept by the army and navy officials both in times of peace and war. Of course a person may quickly become diseased from dissipation or disobedience to the rules governing tropical diet. The use of liquor in a hot climate is enervating, this can easily be overcome by frequent sojourns in a higher or cooler region.

The great necessity for education in the Philippines is shown by the discovery of the fact that less than 10 per cent of the entire population could speak a common language. It was supposed that the majority of the people understood Spanish, but this has been proved incorrect. It was the policy of the friars to learn the language of the people rather than to teach their own, so they could interpret the law arbitrarily. There were many people counted as literate who could speak some Spanish, but were unable to read or write it. As a result of the educational system now in vogue throughout the islands the bulk of the population will soon be able to affiliate by means of the English language.

There are now 375,000 children attending school in the Philippines. A few less than a thousand American school teachers are engaged here at the present time and they have about five thousand native teachers assisting them. The number of American teachers will gradually diminish as the supply of natives eligible to engage in the work increases. The difficulties encountered by the first Americans who came here to teach can hardly be described. They succeeded Spanish instructors who taught the pupils to write upon banana leaves with a pointed stick. The process of counting was to cut notches in a piece of wood. Some of our teachers had to build their own school houses, manufacture their own benches, and then work for months without slates, books or other material. Those who could not procure building material conducted their classes under shade trees.

Some critics have insisted that too much money has been spent upon educational work, but that contention can hardly be justified. On account of the natives having so long been amenable to the influence of the Spanish friars, they are more easily controlled by the school teachers than by either the civil or military authorities. The rural teacher in the Philippines is the natural leader of the community, and his functions are so numerous and so novel as to be quite outside the limitations of the same calling in the United States. He is appealed to in cases of oppression, he settles political disputes, presides over all functions, superintends the building of roads and bridges and has even been called upon to assist in dispersing bandits. That the people are anxious for education is shown by the fact that the attendance is 62 per cent of the enrollment as compared with 74 per cent in the United States. The wisdom of the broad educational campaign inaugurated by General Otis is becoming more important every day.

There is little variety in the permanent occupation of the Filipinos. Forty per cent of the men are farmers. The women are very industrious, and are especially clever at spinning and weaving. With the crudest kind of looms they manufacture most exquisite fabrics, and make hats, mats and carpets of an exceeding fine quality. The returns of the recent census show that the proportion of women engaged in remunerative occupation in the Philippines is more than double those similarly employed in the United States, and three times greater than in either Porto Rico or Cuba. The count of wage earners showed that the Filipinos begin work when very young. Only a small portion of the female population accepts work as domestic servants, this being a line of endeavor almost entirely monopolized by the men. Great difficulty was experienced in classifying the various occupations because of the tendency among the people to dabble in so many different kinds of work. For instance a man might be a farmer for several hours during the day, a coachman in the evening, and be looking after some fishing apparatus late at night.

The Filipino is a jack of all trades and good at none. The range of occupation he will attempt seems to be beyond estimate. I heard a man telling about one versatile native who inside of two months had been a lawyer, a plantation overseer, a coachman, a bartender, and a waiter in a restaurant. The stimulus to effort and concentration has not been great because of the fertility of the country and the small demands of the civilization. On account of having been a subject race so long the ambition of these people has been stunted by the seeming hopelessness of their future. But now that they have an opportunity to develop themselves and reap the reward of their endeavor, it is believed they will become responsive to the possibilities awaiting them.

The principal wealth of the Philippines has always been the products of the soil, but the individual holdings of the people are so small that they can hardly be called farms. The average size of each holding throughout the Archipelago is only eight and a half acres, while in America the average size of all farms is about 150 acres. Less than half of the available agricultural land of the country is under cultivation. The most valuable product of the islands is hemp. This is the fiber taken from a sort of plantain, generally called abaca. It is similar to the banana plant and grows nowhere else except in this latitude. It is famed all over the world as "Manila hemp." It grows wild and all attempts to propagate it in other climates have failed. The land upon which it grows is always fertile and well drained, and a strange fact in connection with it is that irrigation can not be substituted for natural drainage. Nearly all the hemp exported from the Philippines finds its way to the United States and Europe where it is used in manufacturing rope. That portion consumed in domestic use, however, is utilized in the manufacture of cloth for wearing apparel.

Sugar ranks second to hemp in the value of the island's products. It was formerly the most valuable crop of the islands, but a number of causes have combined to give it a secondary place. The first of these was doubtless the competition of beet sugar. The unreliability of labor, the difficulty in procuring beasts of burden, and poor transportation facilities, were other obstacles which the planters could not overcome. In 1881 over 460,000,000 pounds were exported, but this amount fell until, during the year following American occupation, the amount produced for export was not quite 190,000,000 pounds. However, the recent advance in the price of sugar has encouraged the planters to renew their efforts, and the acreage is now being largely increased.

The third commercial crop of the islands is tobacco. The plant raised here is of American origin and was brought from Mexico by Spanish missionaries. For a time the industry was conducted as a government monopoly, but the embargo was removed in 1882. From that time its culture has enjoyed a rapid growth. The home consumption of cigars and cigarettes is very great and this, together with the increasing foreign demand, makes the industry one of much promise. Luzon produces the best grade of the leaf.

The cocoanut is rapidly increasing in commercial value. The dried meat of this tropical luxury is called copra. Although it is a comparatively new product it now ranks fourth among the exportable commodities of the Philippines. The bi-products of the cocoanut are used in every conceivable way. The sap and meat provide the native with delicious food and drink. The shells are valuable as household utensils, and can be made into many kinds of ornament. The tree provides lumber for the construction of houses, and the foliage makes excellent roofing for the same. There are eighty-three distinct uses to which the substance of this wonderful tree may be put, ranging from the manufacture of toothpicks to the preparation of dye and hair oil. There are great possibilities in its culture, because it is extremely prolific, yielding six or seven crops of nuts every twelve months.

A Very Sick Boy.

Mark Twain on his last visit to his birthplace—Hannibal, Mo.—told the school children a true story about a schoolboy, says the Philadelphia Record.

"This boy," he said, "Awoke one morning very ill. His groans alarmed the household. The doctor was sent for and came, post haste.

"'Well,' said the doctor as he entered the sickroom, 'what is the trouble?'

"'A pain in my side,' said the boy.

"'Any pain in the head?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'Is the right hand stiff?'

"'A little.'

"'How about the right foot?'

"'That's stiff too.'

"The doctor winked at the boy's mother.

"'Well,' he said, 'you're pretty sick. But you'll be able to go to school on Monday. Let me see, today is Saturday and ——'

"'Is today Saturday?' said the boy in a vexed tone. 'I thought it was Friday.'

"Half an hour later the boy declared himself healed and got up. Then they packed him off to school, for it was Friday, after all."

A Wealth of Corn.

Whatever woes may be in store for the people of this country, it is quite certain that, in the immediate future at least, we shall not starve.

Corn is ripening into a great golden harvest—a harvest that will tax the labor capacity of the whole great west to its fullest.

America has long been teaching the world to take our corn. Europe has learned to eat it and to like it. The market is practically unlimited. There is no such thing as overproduction of corn.

There is no cereal carrying more nutrition, none capable of wider adaption, than corn. It fills an amazingly broad field of usefulness, extending all the way from the daintiest tables to the pig sties; and everywhere it is delicious and healthful. It makes bone and muscle and sinew and brain, and these make character.

There is no end to the explanations advanced for the characteristic strength and vigor of the American people. No explanation is near the truth if it does not include corn.

Corn enters into the character of the Americans as truly as macaroni does with the Italians and sauer kraut with the Germans. If there is to be a national flower none is more appropriate than the corn tassel.

Last year's crop in this country broke all records. But the new record was short-lived. This year's crop exceeds it by the astonishing figure of 127,000,000 bushels.

The latest government crop report indicates a total crop for the country of almost 2,600,000,000 bushels—the largest corn crop ever produced and considerably larger than the ordinary mind can comprehend.

And corn is not all we shall have to eat in plenty. The total winter and spring wheat crop of the United States promises to be 690,000,000 bushels—the largest, with one exception ever raised.

The aggregate production of wheat, corn and oats amounts to 4,164,000,000 bushels, which is a quarter of a billion bushels more than last year.—Atlanta Journal.

Trained Rooster Pet of Sheriff.

When it comes to taming roosters, former Sheriff P. D. Gilreath has proved himself almost as much as an expert as he is known to have been in taming hardened criminals in the old days when men of the Jim Howard stamp had to be handled in Greenville county.

The "Old Sheriff" as his friends, like to call him, is spending much of his time in these days at his farm near Greer, and among his pets is a handsome Plymouth Rock rooster. This bird never allows the sheriff to get out of his sight if he can prevent it, and follows him from one part of the place to another.

Visitors at the farm never fail to see the rooster, for he is a wonder. He will crow just as violently and just as long as the sheriff tells him to. He frequently comes into the house and is fed by the sheriff. One of the rooster's best tricks is to take bread, or anything else he should happen to be eating, out to the hens in the yard at the direction of the sheriff. No matter how hungry he may be he will not touch a grain of corn or a thing until his master gives his permission.

Sometimes the sheriff lets him eat a grain and then makes him take the next to the other fowls in the yard. This is always accompanied with a great deal of clucking and strutting. There is only one thing the big rooster seems to fear and that is a strange dog. If there is one nearby the sheriff has a hard time to coax him into performing. In accompanying the sheriff on his rambles about the place the rooster is continually clucking and never fails to answer the sheriff everytime he is spoken to just as though he understood every word that was being said. He is a wonderful bird in his way. Sheriff Gilreath regards him as one of his best friends and it would take a big pile of money to get the Plymouth Rock.—Greenville News.